THE THIRD DAY.

Wednesday, the 23rd February, 1927.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on the 23rd February, 1927.

DEWAN: Gentlemen, I had letters last night from Mr. R. Nilakanta Pillai and Mr. S. Subbaraya Aiyar, in which they ask permission to be allowed to speak on the subject they had yesterday. The reason why I did not allow them to speak yesterday was that I had already made a full pronouncement and had definitely stated in my opening Address that the final verdict would lie with the representatives of the people. In view of that pronouncement, I thought it would be a waste of the time of the House if they speak on the subject and it must necessarily be a matter of supererogation. But if these gentlemen wish to speak, let them by all means speak (*Applause*).

23. Sale of Puduval lands to non-Travancoreans.

MR. R. NILAKANTA PILLAI (*Member, Tiruvalla taluk, Group II*) said that the object of his representation was to draw the attention of the Government to the effects which the proposed Brooke Bond concession would have on the existing agricultural facilities in Central Travancore. That aspect of the question did not appear to have been considered by the Government in spite of public agitation in the press and on the platform. The scheme involved the permanent alienation of a large tract of land equal to the size of a taluk in the rich forest regions forming the catchment area of the Pamba river. The exploitation of that area and the consequent denudation of the forests there would render the river useless for agricultural purposes, as a result of which the arable lands in the neighbourhood would be converted into sandy deserts. It was therefore absolutely necessary in the first instance to investigate, through a committee of experts, how far the exploitation of the area in question would affect agriculture in Central Travancore and to publish the results of the investigation. Till then, the sending of the survey party, which involved heavy expenditure, could be delayed.

Again, the question whether it would be advisable in the interests of the country to assign large tracts of land from the catchment area of important rivers and the question whether such assignment, even if found unobjectionable, should be made in the name of foreign corporations should also be considered. The tying up of lands in perpetuity involved in the ownership of lands by a company, which enjoyed a perpetual existence in law, was neither safe nor advantageous to any country, much less to Travancore where an educated and intelligent set of people, steadily advancing in economic organisation and enterprise, were on the look-out for land for extension of cultivation. It would therefore be a suicidal policy if the Government made a permanent alienation of one-twentieth part of the State in favour of a foreign company. The questions relating to the treatment of natives by foreigners and the possible grip which such landed proprietors might have on the politics of the country would convert a peaceful land into a bear-garden. The advantages resulting from the scheme, as pictured by the Government, were more or less imaginary and had to be examined more carefully. In the circumstances, the member prayed that a committee of experts and non-officials elected by the Assembly be appointed to consider the question from an economic and political point of view before taking further steps for surveying or sorting out the land.

24. The various aspects of the contemplated assignment of an extensive tract of Puduval land to a European Company.

MR. S. SUBBARAYA AIYAR (*Member, Municipal Council, Haripad*) said that it was gratifying to note that all the facts connected with the proposal for the assignment of a large extent of land to a company had been frankly stated by the

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